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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA, B/BXN,
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ AND LEBANON

Editorial Commentary on Lebanon

-- "The Israeli crimes in Lebanon"

Center-left, influential Arabic daily Ad-Dustour (09/26) editorializes: "Some people may view the U.N. committee on Lebanon with contempt due to the receding role and stature of the United Nations in defending international agreements and its submission to American influence. Yet, it is the duty of those who call for the need to reinstate respect for the international organization to make more of the committee's role and give it more attention. This entails that human rights organizations and groups, including the Red Crescent and the Red Cross, to take advantage of the presence of that committee in Lebanon to present evidence and proof of Israel's crimes there.... The least that we can do is to make a list of the victims of the Israeli crimes. If we hand over this list or other lists to the United Nations and other international organizations, we are putting an end to the impetuous approach towards Arabs and Arab blood that is not getting any respect in Palestine and Lebanon nor in any part of the Arab world. It is time to change this shameful situation."

"Hassan Nasrallah's speech"

Daily Columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back-page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (09/26): "The fiery speech delivered by Hassan Nasrallah is reminiscent of the speeches that used to be delivered by the late Gamal Abdul Nasser where he would fire up the people as he spoke about the alleged victory, threatened Israel, and said how is going to give America the boot. In both cases, the political leader was addressing emotions and instincts away from the head and logical calculations.... Mr. Nasrallah needs to be reminded that his uncalculated adventure with Iranian timing has resulted in Israel's return to south Lebanon, in his disappearance from public into a shelter in the ground, and in placing Lebanon under international mandate.... Are these the results of the victory?"

Editorial Commentary on Iraq

-- "A new opportunity to salvage Iraq"

Daily Columnist Jamil Nimri writes on the back-page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (09/26): "The main players [in Iraq] are Iran and the United States, and they are in trouble. The door is now open for a European and Arab role. A proposition to have Islamic forces for instance replace the American forces in

Baghdad does stand a good chance and might be accepted by all the Iraqi parties if it is linked to a political project of setting a timetable for ending the occupation. The only remaining pretext now after the American failure and exposing the error of the war in the first place is that the country must not be left for a civil war. But so far the American forces are failing to stop the ongoing massacre, which makes the replacement of these forces with friendly Islamic and Arab forces for instance the only alternative interim solution for now."

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